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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0606

June 10, 2010

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC, 20500

Dear President Obama:

The recent and unprecedented action by NASA to force nearly \$1 billion in diversions from the already approved and appropriated Fiscal Year 2010 Constellation program is in clear defiance of the language included in the 2010 Omnibus Appropriations Act. It is, furthermore, poor economic and strategic planning, will not save taxpayer money, and should be rescinded.

As you know, I oppose the termination of the Constellation program. I feel as Neil Armstrong does, that this historic decision to end manned space flight by the US government was "poorly advised." Unfortunately, recent actions will pile chaos and mismanagement on top of this already significant error.

While I feel your revised plan to salvage the Orion capsule, as expressed at Kennedy Space Center in April, is a poor alternative to an efficient and robust US space program, I also feel compelled to point out that even this potential arrangement is being mismanaged.

Lockheed Martin, whose work on the Orion program to date has been successful and innovative, has acknowledged that a recent decision by NASA to impose \$1 billion in termination liability costs will require a 20 percent reduction in the Orion program to comply. This means lay-offs of 500-600 employees on the Orion program alone. Lay-offs of this size will disrupt and delay even the reduced Orion program you have envisioned. Furthermore, this proposal does not actually cut overall spending. Inevitably, the NASA bureaucracy's scramble to reprogram funds and reduce manpower will force inefficiencies and waste. It will also place more than 5,000 jobs in jeopardy.

The clear intent of Congress was to prohibit major restructuring and Reductions In Force at NASA until Congress fully and appropriately considers any changes. Given that these reductions to meet the unexpected termination liability demands are clearly counter to Congressional intent, as well as harmful to the economy and ruinous to our space technology infrastructure and abilities (one of our foremost national assets), I ask you to please rectify NASA's move immediately.

Sincerely,


Mike Coffman
Member of Congress